

Helen A. Clarke



*A Guide
to Mythology*

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS A MYTH?

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What is a myth? This looks like a simple question, and one that ought to be easy to answer. Yet it is one which has puzzled for centuries the heads of many learned men, who in their attempts to give a satisfactory answer to the question, have written whole libraries of profound books on the subject. It would seem almost hopeless for us to try and find an answer, if it were not that we live in the Twentieth Century, which is like a great hilltop towering above all the past centuries; and from this height we are able to look down and see right into the minds of all these learned and distinguished men, and understand why they found the answer to this question so difficult.

Let us try to imagine all the myths which have come into existence since the beginning of the world shut up in a huge round castle in the midst of a wide plain, and all these learned men like knights of the Middle Ages besieging the castle to find out the secrets that are locked up within it. They come, galloping up on horseback from every quarter of the plain—North, East, South, West—carrying long spears with which they batter away at the castle until they succeed in making a hole through the wall. Then each of these knights of learning becomes so intent upon what he sees in the castle through the hole that he, himself, has made that he is entirely unaware of what the other knights see through the holes they have made. Then they all go off and write their learned books, telling what they have seen, and when

they come to read each other's books, of course, they have terrible battles—all of words fortunately—in their attempts to settle who is right, and each one contends that he has seen all there is to be seen through his own particular little spear hole. But we, upon the hilltop can perceive that every one of the knights saw something about myths which was true, and the way to find the answer we want is to piece together all the fractions of truth which each man saw into a whole truth, or something near a whole truth, for, you know, the whole truth about anything is so immense that it is almost if not quite impossible to find it all out.

For example, it would not be possible for me to tell you in this one short chapter all the secrets which all the knights of learning saw as they looked into the castle; but I shall tell you a few of them, for it will help you to understand more intelligently what a myth really is.

The first knight to be seen galloping out of a very far-distant past is the Greek Theognis of Rhegium. He lived six hundred years B.C., but even as long ago as that there had come to be such an immense number of myths in Greece, that their existence was already a cause for much wonder. He carried a spear, called "allegory," and when he battered into the castle, the only truth he could see was that all myths were allegories. According to him the Greek mythical gods, Apollo, Helios, and Hephaestos, were fire under different aspects: Hera was the air; Posidon, the water; Artemis, the moon, and so on. Other learned Greeks followed in his footsteps and saw much the same things. For example, three hundred years later, Aristotle said that myths were the attempt of the world before his time to

express *philosophical* speculations, and Plutarch four hundred and sixty years later said that myths were *metaphysical* statements in disguise. That is, they all thought that myths had been invented to stand as symbols of objects in nature or of ideas which men had expressed.

Now, if we look again, we shall see another Greek knight galloping out of the past whose name was Euhemeros. He was a historian, a philosopher, and a traveller, and he lived about three hundred years B.C. He was the friend of the King of Macedon, who sent him off on missions to various countries. The spear he carried was called "history," and the way he came to decide that myths were historical accounts of real persons is told in the following little story. Once when he was off on his travels, after sailing about for several days, he arrived in the Indian Ocean, where he found a group of islands the most important of which was Panchaia. The inhabitants of this island were distinguished for their piety and honored the gods by the most magnificent sacrifices and offerings of gold and silver. Among the wonderful works of art in this island was an immensely tall column on the top of which was a temple to Jupiter Triumphant. This was supposed to have been erected by Jupiter himself, when, an earthly monarch, he marched through the country victorious. Inside this temple was a column upon which were recorded the doings of Jupiter and of his father and grandfather, Kronos and Uranos.

This story, itself, is so evidently a myth that it does not amount to anything as a proof of the historical theory. Nevertheless there have been many to adopt this belief.

Other knights of learning, both ancient and modern, have carried lances with the sounding name, "natural phenomena." When they look into the castle they see myths as personifications of natural phenomena. Everything that we see happening in nature comes under the head of natural phenomena. The rising and setting of the sun, the moon and the stars each day, the clouds that drift across the sky, storms and whirlwinds, the lightning flash and the loud roar of the thunder, as well as the gentle rain, the tinkling of waterfalls, and the light morning breezes. When all these objects and events in nature are talked about as if they had the same powers as human beings, they are said to be personified. Here is a very pretty example of a myth in which the dawn is personified. It is taken from one of the most ancient books in the world, the "Rig Veda," about which you will hear more later.

"The lovely Dawn arousing man goes before the sun preparing practicable paths, riding in a spacious chariot, expanding everywhere, she diffuses light at the commencement of the days."

Among the ancient knights of learning who thought that all myths were started in this way was the great Thucydides; and Cicero also believed that the exalted beings in mythology who were worshipped as gods were in reality personifications of the objects in nature which struck the imagination of primitive mankind.

There are also many modern knights of learning who hold the same view, among the most distinguished of whom is the English scholar, Max Müller. About him and his followers Sir George Cox and John Fiske, the American historian and

thinker, you will one day know more if you continue your studies in mythology. When Max Müller came to write his learned books upon what he saw in the castle of myths, he supported his learning upon many interesting facts which he had discovered when he was studying the languages of different races.

In comparing the ancient Greek language with the ancient language of India, the Sanskrit, he found out that they were often very much alike. This drove him to the conclusion that they must both be descended from some still older language. He noticed also remarkable resemblances between the myths of Greece and those of India, of which there were large numbers collected in the old books in Sanskrit and other Indian languages. Then he made up his mind that the ancient race of people who spoke the old language from which Greek and Sanskrit were descended must have had a great fondness for inventing myths, and that these myths had been handed down from generation to generation. Finally, many of the descendants of this ancient race went to live in India, while others went to live in Greece, and that was the reason the languages and the myths of these two peoples were so much alike in many ways. The original home of this ancient myth-making race has been thought to be Central Asia, and the race is known in history as the Aryan race. But Max Müller and others who agreed with him were so intoxicated with their new discoveries that they were constantly in danger of making fanciful comparisons between the words of the two languages, and building upon these fanciful comparisons explanations of myths, even more mythical than the myths

themselves. In fact they not only saw in one direction like the other knights, but they used a huge magnifying glass that tinted every thing with unnatural rainbow colors such as you have seen when looking through an opera glass.

I will speak of three others only of the many modern knights of learning who have seen some of the truth:—E. B. Tylor, Andrew Lang, and James G. Frazer. The first of these tells especially about some very curious beliefs possessed by primitive men. These beliefs colored their imagination no matter what kind of myths they might invent. One of them was that a spirit, separate from their ordinary life lived inside of their bodies; another that all things in nature had life like themselves, and also spirits dwelling within them like the spirits within themselves. This was thought to be true of trees and stones as well as of birds and animals. The second, Andrew Lang, considers that myths are stories which tell about the manners and customs of ancient or savage people, and the third, James G. Frazer, sees in the worship of the spirits of vegetation, the corn, the trees and so on the origin of most myths. Very long and very profound are the arguments with which each supports his particular point of view, and many are the illustrations drawn from the myths of all lands with which each illuminates his argument, but, like the rest of the knights, each sees so much in his own truth that he is more or less blind to all that others see.

Now that I have tried to give you this glimpse at the various explanations of myths proposed from the most ancient times to the present, I think we shall be a little better prepared to find out an answer for ourselves that will be satisfactory.

Suppose we take the top off the castle in which we imagined the myths and the secrets of their origin to be locked up, and look down upon them from our hilltop, using as an aid to our vision all the light that comes in through the numerous breaks in the castle made by the lances of the knights. What will the wonderful treasures revealed to us be like? They will not be like jewels, all polished and placed in regular shining rows, for myths were never fashioned as a jeweler would fashion his stones—all at once—into perfectly finished and beautiful shapes. No!—the imaginary contents of our castle which will best stand as a symbol or picture of all the myths of the whole world in all their wonderful variety will be an immense forest of almost countless kinds of trees. Under the trees there are many sorts of plants and flowers; and if we look closer we shall see that some of these trees and plants are ugly in shape, some are even decaying, but there are many most lovely to behold, and a few of the trees tower up above the others and are profusely decorated with many shining ornaments, making them look like Christmas trees. You will see at once that by using this symbol to stand for all the myths of the whole world I want to point out and make clear to you the important fact that myths were not made all at once as the jeweler polishes his stones, but they grew up gradually from small beginnings, like oaks from acorns, or pines from pine cones—and the soil in which they grew was the minds of primitive men ages and ages ago.

Sometimes the trees of one land will look exceedingly like those in another land—in fact, being the same sort of trees, but differing somewhat in shape. Then the smaller

plants and flowers are the symbols for many kinds of little mythical stories about every thing that you can think of, or rather that primitive man could think of, for he didn't know about trolleys and telephones and automobiles, and so there are not any myths about such things as these. And the Christmas trees are the myths which have been enlarged and glorified by having myths from other lands added to them.

Now the point comes up, how did all this vast forest of myths which covers the whole world arise, for the forest symbolizes, remember, only the forms oral or written in which the myths of the world have come to us. To answer this, we must now try to imagine behind all this wonderful growth of myth, on the one hand, the mind of mankind, and on the other hand all the objects of external nature. And besides we must think of mankind as it was untold ages ago in the real childhood of the world. In those far off days when the first men used to roam about the world getting their food by hunting, with nothing but caves or tents to live in, man's consciousness of himself was not even as strong as that of a small child to-day. Still, he had implanted in him the power of observing whatever went on before him, and a constant curiosity to know the cause or the "reason why" of every thing he saw. Above all he had a vivid imagination. He could "make believe" about the things he saw far better than children do in their games to-day, and that is how he came to invent explanations of most of the things he saw about him. Here, for example, is a little story invented by the Hottentots to explain two things which they had

observed, the spots on the moon, and the way in which the upper lip of a hare is split.

“The moon sent an insect to men saying, ‘Go thou to men and tell them, as I die and dying live, so ye shall also die and dying live.’ The insect started with his message, but while on the way was overtaken by the hare who asked him upon what errand he was bound. The insect answered that he had been sent by the moon to tell men that as she dies and dying lives so also shall they die and dying live! The hare said, ‘As thou art an awkward runner, let me go.’ With these words he ran off and when he reached men he said, ‘I am sent by the moon to tell you, as I die and dying perish, in the same manner shall ye also die and come wholly to an end.’ Then the hare returned to the moon and told her what he had said to men. The moon reproached him angrily, saying, ‘Darest thou tell the people a thing which I have not said?’ With these words she took up a hatchet to split his head, missing that the hatchet fell upon the upper lip and made a deep gash. Maddened by such treatment, the hare flew at the moon and scratched her face which are the dark spots which we now see on the moon.”

You see these primitive Hottentots treat every thing in nature as if it were alive just as we learned from Tylor. They really did not know what a great difference there is between a human being and an animal or between animals and plants or even plants and stones. All of the objects in nature being endowed with life, they might speak and act just like human beings. But it was only the very wisest of human beings who could understand this language that the animals and plants and other objects in nature might speak.

On this account all nature seemed very mysterious to primitive man, and he therefore was ready to worship almost any object that caught his attention.

Then the strange feeling he had that another spirit quite detached from his ordinary life lived inside his body, made him imagine queer things about this spirit; for one thing, that it might leave his body and go off on independent journeys in the form of a bird or an animal, or even that it might be stowed away for safe keeping in some animal or other object, like the famous story of the Norse giant whose heart, which is equivalent to his true life, is far away in an egg that is in a church that is on an island that lies in a lake. In many stories belonging to this primitive time, a man's luck often stands for his life and is bound up in some object outside of himself as in this story of the Algonquin Indians, which reflects all the strange notions I have spoken of as well as giving an explanation of the appearance of the sheldrake duck. It is the story of how one of the Partridge's wives became a sheldrake duck, and why her feet and feathers are red.

"There was once a hunter who lived in the woods. He had a brother or spirit who was so small that he kept him in a box, and when he went forth he closed this very carefully, for fear lest an evil spirit should get him.

"One day this hunter, returning, saw a very beautiful girl sitting on a rock by a river, making a moccasin. And being in a canoe he paddled up softly and silently to capture her; but she, seeing him coming, jumped into the water and disappeared. On returning to her mother, who lived at the bottom of the river, she was told to go back to the hunter

and be his wife; 'for now,' said the mother, 'you belong to that man.'

"The hunter's name was Mitchihess, the Partridge. When she came to his lodge he was absent. So she arranged every thing for his return, making a bed of boughs. At night he came back with one beaver. This he divided; cooked one half for supper and laid by the other half. In the morning when she awoke he was gone, and the other half of the beaver had also disappeared. That night he returned with another beaver, and the same thing took place again. Then she resolved to spy and find out what all this meant.

"So she lay down and went to sleep with one eye open. Then he quietly rose and cooked the half of the beaver, and taking a key unlocked a box, and took out a little red dwarf and fed him. Replacing the elf, he locked him up again, and lay down to sleep. And the small creature had eaten the whole half beaver. But ere he put him in his box he washed him and combed his hair, which seemed to delight him.

"The next morning, when her husband had gone for the day, the wife sought for the key, and having found it opened the box and called to the little fellow to come out. This he refused to do for a long time, though she promised to wash and comb him. Being at length persuaded, he peeped out, when she pulled him forth. But whenever she touched him her hands became red, though of this she took no heed, thinking she could wash it off at will. But lo! while combing him, there entered a hideous being, an awful devil, who caught the small elf from her and ran away.

"Then she was terribly frightened. And trying to wash her hands, the red stain remained. When her husband returned

that night he had no game; when he saw the red stain he knew all that had happened; when he knew what had happened he seized his bow to beat her; when she saw him seize his bow to beat her she ran down to the river and jumped in to escape death at his hands, though it should be by drowning. But as she fell into the water she became a sheldrake duck. And to this day the marks of the red stain are to be seen on her feet and feathers.”

You will observe a very strange custom alluded to in this story, and that is the way in which the hunter is described as capturing the maiden for his wife instead of gently trying to persuade her to be his wife. This shows that it is a very far-back myth, for there are many other stories to prove that savages learned to be much more gentle in their ways toward women even before men became altogether civilized.

How primitive men came to have such peculiar beliefs we cannot say positively. Some people have thought that perhaps their dreams made them think that there was a spirit inside of them separate from their ordinary life, while the sounds and movements in nature, such as the singing of a waterfall, the rustling of leaves, or the sound which stones would give out when knocked together, would seem to the uneducated mind of early mankind, to be signs of life like his own.

Another very early belief is that in magic and sorcery. Primitive man used to imagine that he could make it rain by imitating the thunder, which he did by shaking dried seeds about in a gourd. Magic is really the producing of any desired effect or event by means which are quite outside of

the laws of nature. As the primitive savage did not know any thing about the laws of nature, laws which have taken ages for men to discover and all of which are not even yet discovered, he revelled in the invention of means by which he thought he might accomplish the things he would like to do. Sometimes he asked spirits to help him, and if what he wanted to do was evil, he would ask aid of evil spirits. There are countless myths in which magic plays a part, examples of which you will see as you read the stories given in the following chapters.

Since in the time most remote men depended upon animals almost entirely for their food, it is probable that animals were the objects that made the most vivid impressions on them, and, therefore, that stories of animals belong to this most primitive stage.

At this time, too, it is likely that the worship of animals arose, for almost every tribe of savages had a sacred animal which, except in rare instances, it was never allowed to kill and from which it often imagined itself descended.

After many ages, mankind began to till the ground, and to raise grain and vegetables, then plants and trees were more especially observed by them, and the mythical stories have, in consequence, more about plants and trees in them; and, as they had sacred animals, they had also sacred trees or plants, and worshipped them or imagined themselves descended from them.

Then as men progressed in their powers of observation they saw natural phenomena more and more. The succession of night and day impressed itself upon them, they took note of the motions of the sun, the moon and the

stars, clouds caught their attention, storms filled them with awe and fear as the lightning flashed and the thunder roared and rattled in its might. The wind laughed in summer breezes or howled in wintry blasts and they noticed it, and as soon as their attention was fully aroused to all these wonders of nature, they began to think of them, as not only endowed with powers like their own, but as living beings. First, they frequently personified nature as animals, then as human beings, and as they had worshipped sacred animals and sacred plants and sacred trees, now they worshipped these gods of nature; and as they invented tales about the animals and the trees, so they invented tales about these gods of nature. As one would expect, the stories about animals and trees would often be mingled with the new stories of the nature gods, and sometimes changed so that one would hardly recognize them. And then, again, a story told about a nature god in one part of the world would, on account of the early wanderings of the human race from one land to another, be added as an ornament to a story told in another part of the world, like the ornaments on the Christmas trees in the castle.

Again, whole myths would be transported, and as they reached different countries they would be changed somewhat so that they would reflect the manners or the knowledge of that particular country. A strange thing, however, about many myths is that those in one part of the world are so much like those in another part of the world that it would seem as if they must have been invented by the same people. Not only are there myths in India and Greece which are very much alike, but there are myths in

Scandinavia and North America and South America that strongly resemble each other and those of Greece and India.

Why this should be the case is another point about which learned men have had many opinions. Some of them have thought that the whole human race must once have lived in one particular spot on the globe, and that from there large numbers wandered forth to seek new homes in all the other countries on the globe, taking with them the myths which they had in common when they all lived together. It has never been settled just where that particular spot was, and probably it never will be. Perhaps it was in Central Asia, perhaps it was in the southern part of Spain, perhaps in Norway and Sweden, perhaps in the island of Atlantis, in the Southern Seas, which a legend says was submerged ages and ages ago. All of these places have been suggested as the original home of the whole human race, and very good arguments have been brought forward to prove the truth of every one of these suggestions.

Since it does not seem possible to find out the truth about this, there are other people who dismiss the idea altogether. They think that man and nature being a good deal alike in whatever part of the world you find them, it is highly probable that myths might resemble each other very strikingly and yet be invented independently by people living in lands far apart, while the differences would be due largely to climate.

Now if we try to think of centuries of time going by until in many countries primitive man is no longer primitive but begins to be more civilized, we shall find that certain groups of myths became crystallized into complete religious

systems, such as existed in Egypt, Assyria, India, Greece, Persia, and many other countries. By this time the human race had attained to a much greater degree of self-consciousness. Men were beginning to understand both themselves and nature better, and they often could see the true causes for the events of nature going on about them. The next step was for them to begin to observe very carefully the systems of religious myths which had been handed down to them by their forefathers. Upon these they used their imaginative faculty, as man had earlier used it upon nature itself, with the result that they attached new meanings and gave fresh explanations of myths which had originally started as simple personifications of nature. In Greece, for example, Apollo, who was originally a personification of the sun, came to be regarded as the God of Music and Poetry; Athēne, who was originally the Dawn, became the Goddess of Wisdom; Hermes, originally the Wind, became the God of Eloquence and the leader of spirits. This is the way myths gradually grew to have philosophical or metaphysical meanings—that is, to stand as symbols of the deepest and most far-reaching thoughts of which the mind of man at that time was capable. Many of those thoughts are so profound and so wonderful that one needs to have a great deal of knowledge to understand them. All that interests you now is to know that there are such thoughts and that some day you will want to know more about them.

While some myths were thus raised to religious systems, there were many which remained in the form of legends and stories. In the course of many generations, these stories

were told over again and again so that many changes crept into them and many additions were made. Sometimes the effect of these changes was to make a story cruder, sometimes the complexity of a story was increased, and sometimes it became more interesting and beautiful. Stories which have been changed or added to by the people in this way are called *variants* of the same story.

Owing to these facts mythology has been divided into two great sections. That which has risen to the dignity of a religion is called culture-lore, and that which has remained always in the form of stories and legends is called folk-lore. The first reflects the learning, wisdom and manners of the more intelligent portions of humanity, who developed in advance of the others; and the second the beliefs and customs of the less intelligent.

You are probably wondering by this time how all this vast array of myths has come down to us from the long ago past. Much of it has been preserved in ancient books like the "Rig Veda" in India, which is thought to be about four thousand years old, the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" of Homer in Greece, about three thousand years old and many others. These books existed in manuscript for many hundreds of years. Since the invention of printing, large numbers of them have been printed and translated into modern languages. Knowledge of ancient myths has also been obtained from monuments and the inscriptions upon them, from paintings on vases and from statues.

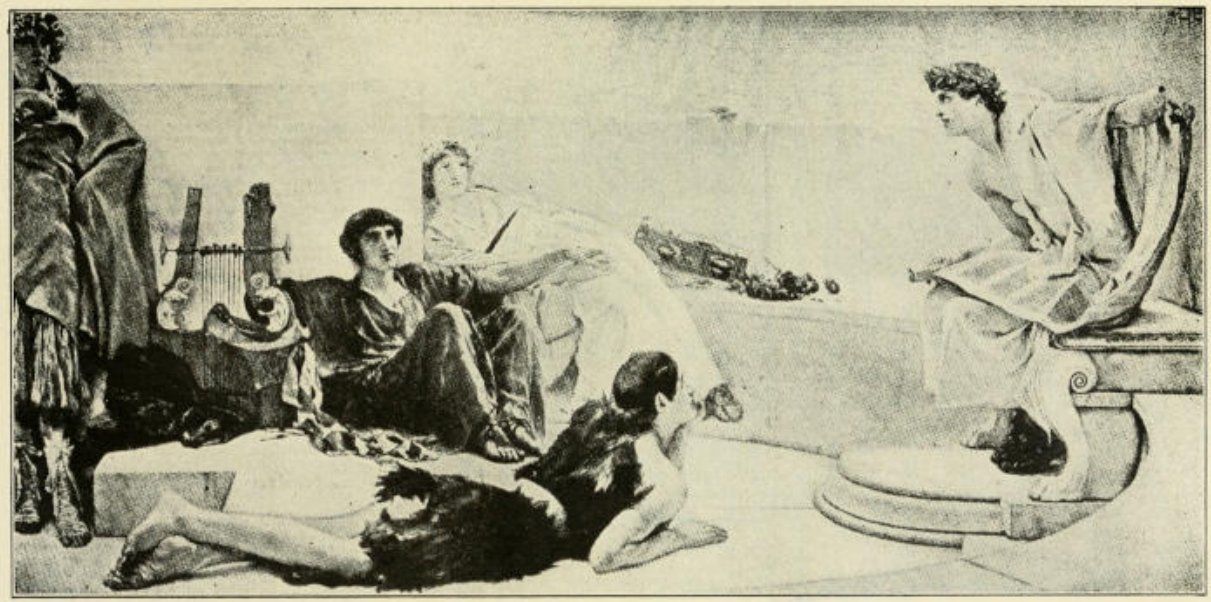
The folk-lore has for the most part been preserved orally in the stories of the common people, and has been handed down from generation to generation and finally taken down

in writing by some one especially interested in collecting the stories, while the myths of the most primitive men are preserved in the survivals of them among the races still remaining uncivilized in various parts of the globe. These have been for several centuries taken down from the mouths of the people, or observed in their customs and recorded by students. Among these less civilized races there are besides crude monuments, and even crude forms of writing by means of which primitive men have recorded their own myths.

You will realize by this time what an extensive and wonderful forest this forest of myths is which we imagine ourselves looking down upon from our hilltop, and after having taken this bird's-eye view of the whole forest, you will be the better able to enjoy going down into the forest and making little journeys in different directions and becoming better acquainted with some of the most beautiful of the myths as you will in the following chapters. And now, moreover, you will have no difficulty in understanding me when I answer the question, "What is a myth?" by saying:

A myth is any imaginative explanation or interpretation by man of himself or of the objects and events in nature outside of himself, including their appearance, their effects and the still greater mystery of their causes. It may exist in many forms from the simple myth of explanation to the complicated systems of religious myths in which the objects of nature are regarded as gods in human form. The chief thing to be remembered about myths is that they are not true, though they may contain some elements of truth;

another, that though not actually true they seemed to be true to the people who made them.



A Reading from Homer. L. Alma-Tadema.

CHAPTER II

ANIMALS IN PRIMITIVE MYTHS

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The stories now to be told belong to that very early time in human life, when, as we learned in the last chapter, men regarded every thing in nature as if it were gifted with life like themselves. The strange ideas to which this belief gave rise are, of course, reflected in their myths. Many of the stories have in them animals and plants which talk, while the transformation of men into animals or animals into men or even gods into animals, when animals are not actually worshipped is frequent.

The most curious of all these beliefs is that mankind is descended from animals, all the more curious because some modern scientific men have, as every one knows, tried to prove very much the same thing. The modern scientist, however, does not have any especial reverence for the antediluvian ape from which he supposes he may have evolved, while the primitive savage regarded with awe and reverence the animals from which he thought himself descended. Groups of savages called clans—all tracing their descent from the same animal, considered that animal to be especially their friend. They would not kill it or eat it, except in a few instances when it was killed for the purposes of sacrifice. Many different animals were regarded as ancestral animals, and became the sign or totem, as it was called, of the tribe. Among totem animals may be mentioned the following in Australia: Opossum, Swan, Duck, Fish. Most of the Australian tribes declare that the family started by a

transformation of these animals into mankind. The North American Indians have a great variety of totem animals: Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Turtle, Deer, Snipe, Heron, Hawk, Crane, Duck, Loon, Turkey, Muskrat, Pike, Catfish, Carp, and so on.

It was an easy step for the savage from the belief in his own descent from some animal to a belief in the sacredness and mystery of animals, naturally leading to the worship of them. The Indians of Peru, for example, regarded the dog as their most exalted deity. They set up the image of a dog in their temples. They were also in the habit of choosing a live dog as a representation of their deity. They worshipped this and offered sacrifices to it, and when it was well fattened up they ate it with solemn religious ceremonies. This is one of the cases where the sacred animal was eaten. Serpent worship is one of the most wide-spread forms of animal worship, an example of which is found among the Zulus to whom certain species are sacred because they are supposed to be the incarnations of ancestral spirits.

Another form which the sacred animal took was that of a supernatural being not only concerned in the origin of men but who had a part to play in the origin of the whole world.

In a large number of these myths, the water already existed and, also of course, the remarkable animal who brought to pass such wonders. The animal was sometimes very humble as in the story told by the Indians of British Columbia of the creation of the world.

HOW A MUSKRAT MADE THE WORLD

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In the beginning nothing existed but water and a muskrat. As the little animal kept diving down to the bottom of the water in search of food, his mouth became frequently filled with mud. This he spat out and so gradually formed by alluvial deposit, an island, which grew and grew until it finally became large enough to be the earth.

The natives of the Philippine Islands tell this story of the creation of the world.

HOW THE KITE HELPED TO MAKE THE WORLD

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The world at first consisted only of sky and water and between these two there flew a kite. The kite became weary of flying about, and finding no place to rest; so he set the water at variance with the sky. Then, in order to keep the water within bounds and so that it should not get uppermost, the sky loaded the water with a number of islands in which the kite might settle and leave them at peace. Now, it happened that floating about in the water was a large cane with two joints which was at length thrown up by the waves at the feet of the kite as it stood on the shore of one of the islands. The kite split open the cane with its bill, and behold, a man came out of one joint and a woman out of the other. They were soon after married by the consent of their god, Bathala Meycapal, and from them are descended the different nations of the world.

In some stories, a fish instead of a bird or an animal is the maker of the earth, while there is an interesting Polynesian myth in which the earth itself was a fish and was

fished up out of the waters with a fish hook. The person who accomplished this remarkable feat was the youngest of the Maui brothers, and the flower of the family, by all accounts. We shall hear of him again in the chapter on child myths.

HOW MAUI FISHED UP THE EARTH

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The youngest Maui was always very badly treated by his elder brothers. They were in the habit of going off and leaving him alone at home with nothing to do and nobody to play with. Their treatment of him at meals was even more shocking. They would devour the best of every thing themselves, and toss him a bone or offal to eat.

Finally, little Maui plucks up courage to assert himself, and the next time his brothers go a-fishing, he takes his place in the boat and insists on going, too. "Where is your hook," ask the two brothers. "Oh this will do," says little Maui, taking out his ancestor's jawbone. This he throws overboard for his fish-hook, but on trying to pull it in again he finds it very heavy. By hauling away at it, however, he at last lifts it, and finds it has brought up the land from the bottom of the deep. This land proved to be an extraordinary combination of an enormous fish and an island with houses and men and animals on it.

The world supporting tortoise is a familiar mythological friend, believed in by Asia, and holding an important place in the mythology of the North American Indian, where a turtle, the lonely inhabitant of the waste of waters, dived to the depths for the earth.

Even so humble an insect as the grasshopper figures in the Bushman's story of the creation of the world. Insignificant as the grasshopper appears to us, to the Bushman he appeared a great creature, called Cagn, with truly omnipotent powers, for he undertook the work of creation without even the usual raw material of water. He simply gave orders and caused all things to appear and to be made,—sun, moon, stars, wind, mountains, animals.

In many of the primitive stories, magic is the means by which the most wonderful effects are produced. It was believed that a magician could bring about any effect he desired by the mere use of his will, and often without any visible symbol of magic power. Sometimes, however, magic wands were used, and sometimes ceremonies were performed for the purpose of producing magical results. On the other hand magical prodigies such as the changing of shape from man to animal often occur without the intervention of any magician.

Whatever may have been the origin of this belief, it is certain that it was just as sincerely believed in as a theory of the universe by early mankind as the doctrine of an endless, persistent energy, always working from cause to effect has been believed in by the nineteenth century scientist.

Very fanciful stories have clustered about the idea that the spirit might be detached from the body, and placed somewhere far away, as you will see when you read the story of "Punchkin."

So firmly was this idea fixed in the savage mind that, it seems probable, his worship of animals, even in the earliest stages of life was really a worship of the spirit within the